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ABSTRACT

The report evaluates the 1985-86 Special Education Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention and Dropout Prevention (AIDP/DPP) programs as they operated in 45 New York City sites. City tax-levy DPP funds were allocated during the 1985-86 school year to the Division of Special Education to expand existing state-funded AIDP services for at-risk handicapped students at the middle-school level. The program served 2,343 students with an average age of 15 years. Eligible students included those who had more than 15 unexplained or unexcused absences during the previous semester (or 30 during the entire year); those characterized by limited English proficiency, school failure, or over-age; and selected students classified as emotionally handicapped. The service model consisted of six components: facilitating services, attendance outreach, counseling, health services, school linkages to promote smooth transition to high school, and alternative education emphasizing vocational and work-readiness skills. The program was evaluated using data collected from student records, staff surveys, and interviews with administrators. Data indicated that of the students receiving a full year of service, 34% improved their attendance, while approximately 40% showed an improvement in the proportion of subjects passed in 1985-86 when compared to their 1984-85 grades. (JW)

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ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT
DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.)
AND DROPOUT PREVENTION (D.P.P.)
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
1985-1986
END OF YEAR REPORT

OEA Evaluation Report

EC 201 229

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EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

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January, 1987

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.) AND DROPOUT PREVENTION (D.P.P.) SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM 1985-1986 END OF YEAR REPORT

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SPECIAL EDUCATION ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT/
DROPOUT PREVENTION AND DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P./D.P.P.) PROGRAMS
1985-86

EVALUATION SUMMARY

This final report examines the 1985-86 Special Education Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention and Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P./D.P.P.) programs as they operated in 45 sites in the five special education regions and the citywide services unit. City tax-levy D.P.P. funds were allocated during the 1985-86 school year to the Division of Special Education to expand existing state-funded A.I.D.P. services for at-risk handicapped students. It presents the characteristics of students in the program; examines the degree to which the program guidelines were implemented; analyzes attendance and course pass rates of student participants; and presents conclusions and recommendations. Data were obtained from student records distributed to each of the 45 A.I.D.P./D.P.P. special education sites; program staff surveys; and interviews with each of the regional program coordinators.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

As specified in program guidelines, participation in the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program was limited to those sites with an attendance rate below the citywide median of 87 percent. Special education sites in the five regions were generally selected from the middle schools targeted for the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. middle school general education program. Program coordinators in consultation with special education Deputy Assistant Superintendents then identified sites in which there were a large number of students classified as emotionally disturbed with low rates of attendance in the 1984-85 school year. The citywide services unit selected sites based on the same criteria.

The A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program provided services to 2,343 students. Program personnel reported that 74 percent of the students were selected because of excessive absences. The remainder were selected based on other eligibility criteria, including academic performance and behavioral problems. Of the total number of participants, 847 students began the program after the beginning of the school year. In addition, 699 students left the program before the end of the school year. Seventy-four percent of the students were boys and 26 percent were girls, reflecting the composition of special education. The students ranged in age from 12 to 21, with 78 percent falling between 14 and 16 years of age. Out of a possible 180 schools days, A.I.D.P./D.P.P. students attended an average of 129 days and passed an average of 56.6 percent of their subjects in the previous year.

Seventy-seven percent of participating students were assigned to intensive program services and 23 percent received monitoring services only. Students assigned to intensive services had an average of 47 absent days in the previous year, whereas students assigned to monitoring

services had an average of 28 absent days. However, in practice students received similar program services irrespective of how they were classified.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Program Requirements

The Chancellor's guidelines established the minimum requirements for services and set limits on the personnel and resources on which funds could be spent. The basic minimum complement of services included: a facilitation component to coordinate A.I.D.P./D.P.P. with other programs operating at the sites; an attendance component with attendance outreach services; a guidance component to provide counseling to identified students, to facilitate linkages for students to related school services, and to conduct parent workshops; a health component to screen students and provide appropriate follow-up services; school-level linkages to provide high school orientations; work/study experiences; jobs (where possible) and Life Skills Training; and an alternative education component to provide appropriate high-interest programs designed to encourage attendance and improve achievement.

The A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program was organized into regional teams, and administered by a regional coordinator and an itinerant .4 full-time equivalent facilitator (either a teacher trainer, guidance counselor, or social worker). The program staff at each site consisted of an itinerant teacher trainer, guidance counselor, social worker, and family worker. Office aides were located at each site.

Component Implementation

As required, all six program components were implemented in each special education region. However, the level of services provided for each component varied among regions. This was due to a number of factors including the nature of the services offered, the availability of staff, the varied needs of students, and alternative services available in each region. Of the six program components, alternative education services and school linkages were found to be particularly effective in serving participants.

A.I.D.P./D.P.P. coordinators reported that program implementation was more effective when it was supported by school principals and classroom teachers and when office space was provided in the school specifically for A.I.D.P./D.P.P. purposes. Service delivery was constrained in sites where regular staff members with specific A.I.D.P./D.P.P. responsibilities had to devote some of their time to general administrative matters.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program Objectives

The Chancellor's Special Circular Number 29 established performance objectives for the 1985-86 A.I.D.P./D.P.P. programs. Of these, the following objectives apply to the Special Education A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program:

- A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with A.I.D.P./D.P.P. services will have 1985-86 attendance that is better than 1984-85.
- A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with A.I.D.P./D.P.P. services will pass at least one more subject in 1985-86 than they did in 1984-85.
- Starting with 1985-86 as a baseline year, a minimum of 50 percent of the students, ninth grade or below, provided with A.I.D.P./D.P.P. services will still be in school three years later.

Changes in Attendance

Thirty-four percent of the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. full-year students improved their attendance rate from 1984-85 to 1985-86. Among the special education regions, attendance improvement ranged from 25.7 to 39.5 percent, with three regions having student attendance improvement greater than 38 percent. One-third of the program participants entered the program after the beginning of the school year. To calculate their attendance improvement, two months of attendance before participation were compared to two months of attendance after program participation began. Of these short-term students, 47 percent showed immediate improvement after joining the program. If short-term students are combined with full-year students, 40 percent of the participants showed improvement compared to their pre-program attendance.

Of the 962 students for whom full-year data were available, 47 percent of students assigned to monitoring services showed improvement in their attendance. Thirty percent of the students assigned to intensive program services improved. Overall, the average percentage attendance of these full year program students declined 7.1 percentage points from 70.8 percent for 1984-85 to 63.7 percent for 1985-86. This change in attendance is comparable to that of the general education at-risk population.

Change in Subjects Passed

Of the students who failed at least one subject in the previous year, 40 percent improved in the proportion of subjects they passed in 1985-86. Because the instructional programs of special education students are

individualized, the reported number of subjects varied substantially more than would be expected for general education students' programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above results, recommendations for the second full year of operation are the following:

- If resources permit, create a separate line for a full-time facilitator to handle administration and free the guidance counselor, social worker, or teacher trainer to provide service on a full-time basis.

- Alternate education and school-linkage services should be expanded and offered to more students. This would entail: training more staff in the Adkins Life Skills program; developing high-interest programs for students who function on a lower academic level; and identifying employment opportunities suitable for these students.

- Issue specific guidelines for providing more systematic interventions to students classified as needing intensive program service or monitoring service.

- Program attendance and academic performance goals might be re-examined in light of the objective data to determine if they are appropriate for this population.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Program (A.I.D.P.) was established by the New York State Legislature in 1984 to provide intensive services to students identified as at risk of dropping out of school. The Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) of the Board of Education received 1.4 million dollars to provide services to special education students who were exhibiting attendance problems. Funds were targeted to middle schools with attendance rates below the citywide median. Within these schools, D.S.E. identified students attending Modified Instructional Service (MIS) I and II classes in regional programs and Special Instructional Environment (S.I.E.) IV, VII, and VIII in citywide services as the target population. These students have historically had the poorest attendance record among special education students. Funds were divided among the five special education regions and the Citywide Services Unit. The program was initiated in 1984, and 1985-86 was the first full year of program operation.

In the spring of 1985, the City of New York approved funds for a Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.) to supplement the A.I.D.P. program. Funding for this program was received in early 1986 and services began immediately. A.I.D.P./D.P.P. set two basic program objectives for 1985-86:

- A minimum of 50 percent of the targeted students would have attendance that was better in 1985-86 than in 1984-85.
- A minimum of 50 percent of the targeted students receiving A.I.D.P./D.P.P. services would pass at least one more subject in 1985-86 than they had in 1984-85.

This report presents the results of the 1985-86 O.E.A. evaluation of the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program.

ORGANIZATION

The program was coordinated centrally, but the actual administration was delegated to six regions: Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn West, Brooklyn East, Staten Island*, Queens, and the Citywide Services Unit (C.S.U.). Within the regions, a coordinator who was part of the regional administrative staff had oversight responsibility. The day-to-day administration was assigned to a full-time A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff member who was designated as the facilitator of the program, and thus performed both administrative and service-delivery functions.

When the program was initiated in September 1985, 47 sites were targeted to receive A.I.D.P. services. However, the number of sites was reduced to 36 in order to make more efficient use of staff and to provide more intensive services to the participating students. When D.P.P. funding was received, nine more sites were added, raising the total to 45 sites. In addition, at nine A.I.D.P. sites the program was expanded through D.P.P. funds.

Generally, each region was staffed by a guidance counselor or social worker, a teacher trainer, and an average of six family workers. In addition, each region had one or two office aides who performed clerical and administrative work. Each of these teams served students in an average of eight schools.

PROGRAM SERVICES

Based on Chancellor's guidelines, the proposed A.I.D.P./D.P.P. service model consists of six components: facilitating services, attendance

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*Staten Island was organized as a separate region, distinct from Brooklyn East.

outreach counseling, health, school linkages and alternative education. Facilitating services are designed to provide ongoing oversight and planning for each student in the program, including attendance monitoring and outreach to both parents and community agencies. By consistently following the attendance and academic progress of students, program staff assess both the kind and intensity of services needed. Based on this assessment, students are offered an individualized program that may include all six services.

Attendance outreach includes daily monitoring of attendance; contact with families via home visits, phone and mail; and on occasion, escorting children to school. Family workers provide the bulk of these services, because they have the most consistent contact with the children in the program.

Counseling services include individual, group, and family counseling. This service is offered by guidance counselors, social workers, and family workers, and is targeted to students not receiving mandated counseling.

School-linkage services are designed to promote a smooth transition from junior high school to high school. They include articulation (planning and arranging the transfer from junior high school to the appropriate high school), visits to high schools, and attending assemblies with high school programs. These services are the responsibility of a number of staff members including teacher trainers and guidance counselors.

Alternative education services are designed to heighten student interest in school. They emphasize vocational and work-readiness skills. Work/study programs, career days, and the Adkins Life Skills program are all features of this component. Teacher trainers are particularly involved

in planning and implementing these services. Health services include a review of students' health records, referral services and, on occasion, escorting students to medical appointments.

All services within the six components had to be offered at each site. However, the level of services provided within each component varied according to the needs of the particular school. For example, if a school was providing alternative education programs through another local special education project, A.I.D.P./D.P.P. school staff would deemphasize this component.

STAFFING

The professional staff of each region consisted of a teacher trainer, and a guidance counselor or social worker. One of them acted as regional facilitator with responsibility for day-to-day administration. In four regions a teacher trainer was designated as facilitator and in two regions this position was filled by a guidance counselor.

The facilitator's duties included coordination of staffing and budget, staff supervision, liaison with school and regional personnel and with the Committee on Special Education (C.S.E.), central monitoring of students' progress, preparing reports, visiting sites, and ordering materials.

The teacher trainer's duties included conducting career education activities in the classroom, such as inviting speakers from different professions, seeking suitable work opportunities in the community, and teaching the Adkins Life Skills program (a curriculum which teaches work readiness skills). They also were responsible for developing lesson plans and curriculum, giving demonstration lessons, ordering and distributing

materials, and consulting with individual teachers regarding the best method of working with specific students.

The guidance counselors and social workers provided individual, group, and family counseling, referrals to community agencies for additional services, and crisis intervention. They also conferred with the family workers, teacher trainers, school-based support teams (S.B.S.T.s), and site supervisors.

Family workers implemented the attendance monitoring and outreach components, which were key elements of this program. Their responsibilities included daily attendance monitoring; home visits; telephone and mail contacts with parents; student escort services to school and, in some instances, to appointments outside the school building; and liaison with school staff.

Office aides were responsible for all the clerical and paperwork associated with the program. They also operated a robot phone which was programmed to call a student's home and report unexcused absences.

STUDENT SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

Although a certain flexibility is reflected in the Special Education A.I.D.P./D.P.P. proposal's entry criteria, Chancellor's Memorandum Number 29 states that only students with more than 15 illegal, unexcused, or unexplained absences during the previous semester or 30 such absences during the entire year are eligible for the program. The Chancellor's memorandum also provides additional acceptable criteria for entry which can be used in lieu of the attendance criteria. They are: limited English proficiency, school failure, and overage.

D.S.E. further refined procedures and criteria for the identification of program participants in target middle schools. Participants from eligible classes and others classified as emotionally handicapped were selected according to the following procedures: A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff in consultation with special education classroom teachers reviewed attendance and academic information (including cumulative record cards, individual education plans, medical histories, and previous correspondence with the students' parents or guardians); teachers then prepared a list of pupils who appeared to demonstrate a high potential for truancy; they then consulted with relevant special education support staff (e.g. S.B.S.T. members) to obtain additional information on the identified "high-risk" students; teachers prepared a brief attendance profile for all "high-risk" students in their class which they forward to their D.S.E. supervisors who would, in turn, forwarded to the regional A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff through their D.S.E. supervisors. Based on the student attendance patterns and student needs in each school, the regional staff selected candidates who would benefit from the program services.

II. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the 1985-86 A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program examined the extent to which participating students' attendance and academic performance improved. The evaluation focused on program organization, the intensity of service delivery, and student outcomes. Data were gathered through interviews, staff surveys and examination of the records of individual students to address the program's objectives and to document program implementation.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

O.E.A. collected data from three sources: student records, staff surveys, and interviews. Data on attendance, academic performance and student demographics were gathered for a total of 2,343 students who participated in the program during the 1985-86 academic year. Similarly, O.E.A. gathered information on program operations from every staff member through interviews or surveys.

Instrumentation

In order to obtain this information, O.E.A. designed a data collection instrument to record information on student background, attendance, grades, reason for referral to the program and services provided. A survey instrument for staff was designed to record information on the work performed, hours spent on each task, and the number of students served. Finally, an interview form was designed for use in interviewing administrators about organizational and start-up issues.

Data Collection

O.E.A. collected data and conducted interviews in May and June of the 1985-86 academic year. O.E.A. staff interviewed all program coordinators during these two months. A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff members completed data collection forms for every student in the program, and each staff member filled out a survey form.

Analysis

The data were analyzed to determine if the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program met its attendance and academic achievement objectives and to assess the level and quality of program implementation. Data analysis proceeded as follows:

- Implementation data were subjected to qualitative analysis.
- Student background characteristics (including age, previous years' attendance*, level of academic performance, and reasons for referral) were aggregated by region, and by level of service;
- Students' attendance improvement was calculated and presented by region, level of service, previous years' severity of absenteeism, a combination of previous years' absenteeism and the type and intensity of services provided during the program year, and by differences in students' program starting dates. For full-year participants, attendance in 1985-86 was compared to that in 1984-85. For those who participated for less than full year, their attendance for the two months prior to program entry was compared to that of the two months after entry.
- The percentage of A.I.D.P./D.P.P. students improving in academic performance was calculated for the entire group and by region.
- The relationship between student characteristics, services received, and attendance improvement was explored by crosstabulating previous years' attendance, services, and attendance improvement.

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*To compute the percentage of time a student was absent from school, the total number of days the student was absent was divided by the total number of days in the school year (days absent plus days present).

III. FINDINGS

The following section presents data based on interviews with regional coordinators and facilitators and surveys of all other A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff. Specific findings addressed in this section are: program implementation, including the degree to which the program was implemented as originally designed (see Chapter I for a full description of program plans), student characteristics and services received, and the attainment of program objectives.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

All regional coordinators and facilitators interviewed reported that the implementation of the program largely conformed to the original plans, in that all service components were offered at all sites. They did, however, report variations in the intensity and level of services provided. This was due to a number of factors taken into consideration by program designers: services already being provided at each site; the specific needs of program participants (e.g. younger students were thought to be more responsive to incentive rewards and trips than other students); finally, the specific skills as well as interests of the staff members at each site.

A.I.D.P./D.P.P. coordinators and facilitators reported that the program was integrated into the daily life of the school. In general the school administrators assigned sufficient office space to program personnel. Most principals were cooperative and supportive, creating a climate which encouraged acceptance of the program goals.

Regional coordinators and facilitators reported a number of constraints within the required implementation of the program. As proposed, some A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff members had to perform double duty as regular staff as well as facilitators (as an example, one teacher trainer reported that due to his duties as regional facilitator he had little time to actually train teachers). Unanticipated staffing adjustments sometimes affected the implementation of the program. As an example, in one region the family worker responsible for implementing the health component resigned. As a consequence the component was not fully implemented in that region.

Staff's Weekly Activities

Teacher Trainers. The teacher trainers organized a diverse range of activities within the service components. A large part of their efforts was devoted to alternative education services. This activity comprised the largest portion of their week: across the regions, an average of 13.3 hours a week (38 percent of their time) was devoted to this activity. The teacher trainers devoted 12.3 hours (36 percent) to school linkages, and 8.9 hours (26 percent) to facilitating services.

Guidance Counselors and Social Workers. Guidance counselors reported spending an average of 18.8 hours or 65 percent of their time conducting individual counseling sessions. The remainder of the guidance counselors' time was devoted to group counseling, parent and family sessions, and alternative education services which included the Adkins Life Skills course and simulated careers. Social workers reported a similar pattern; 75 percent of their time was spent providing individual counseling. They

devoted their remaining time to group and family counseling and alternative education programs.

Family Workers. Family workers spent an average of 17.5 hours a week (50 percent of their time) making home visits. They made an average of six visits a day. They spent seven hours a week (20 percent of their time) on attendance monitoring. The remainder of their time (30 percent) was spent in community agency outreach, phone and mail contacts, health services, escorting children to school in the morning, taking them on trips, and organizing after-school activities.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The following section presents information on students who participated in the 1985-86 A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program, including their age, attendance and subjects passed in the year prior to program participation, their reasons for referral and services they received.

During the 1985-86 school year, A.I.D.P./D.P.P. served 2,343 students. The A.I.D.P. component served 83 percent of the students; the D.P.P. component served the remaining 17 percent. Seventy-four percent of the students were boys and 26 percent were girls, reflecting the gender composition of special education.

Participants' Age, Attendance, and Subjects Passed

Age. As Table 1 indicates, the average age of students during the program year was 15.0. Students ranged in age from 12 to 21, with the bulk of students (78 percent) falling between 14 and 16. The average age of students in each region ranged from 14.4 to 17.3. As these students were served in middle schools, the data suggest that they are considerably older

TABLE 1

Participant's Age, Previous Attendance, and Subjects Passed by Region

Region	N[a]	Age in 1985-86[b]	Average Number of Days Present, 1984-85[c]	Subjects Passed, 1984-85	
				Average Number[d]	Percent[e]
A	(305)	14.7	135.2	3.9	81.8
B	(371)	14.3	137.3	3.6	50.4
C	(399)	14.4	130.3	2.7	48.5
D	(236)	15.0	135.5	3.4	51.8
E	(433)	15.0	134.9	2.9	52.4
F	(215)	14.4	147.1	3.9	54.1
G	(347)	17.3	88.0	1.0	70.6
TOTAL	(2,306)	15.0	129.1	3.0	56.6

[a]Based on number of students reported from each region in 1985-86. Because of missing data entries, not all students are reported for each variable.

[b]Average age in January, 1986.

[c]Average number of days present is based on 180 school days (full year).

[d]Seventy-nine percent of students were reported to have taken from one to 11 subjects. Twenty percent of students were reported as having no subjects passed or failed. (They are not included in the analysis.) The remaining .3 percent of students were reported as having passed or failed more than 11 subjects.

[e]Average percents are based on the total number of subjects passed divided by the total number of subjects passed and failed in the 1984-85 year.

Source: Student I.E.P.s and cumulative records.

than their grade placement would indicate, and are therefore at risk of dropping out.

Attendance. Out of a possible 180 days, the average number of days which students were present in the year prior to their participation in A.I.D.P./D.P.P. was 123.4 or 68 percent. For each of the regions the average number of days present ranged from 88 in region G (under 49 percent) to 147 in region F (82 percent). Region G's target students appear to be the neediest in terms of previous attendance and appear on average to be the oldest. The data suggest that target student characteristics varied from region to region, reflecting differences in the populations of the regions themselves.

Percent of Subjects Passed. The Chancellor's objective on academic performance was based on a general education population in which students are expected to take a fairly uniform course load. In the case of special education, subjects taken and passed may have a different meaning as an instructional outcome. The instructional program emphasizes students' meeting individualized short-term objectives. Teachers may be judging and reporting student performance more in individualized skill mastery, than in competence in a standardized curriculum.

The average percent of subjects passed by A.I.D.P./D.P.P. students in the year prior to their participation in the program was 56.6. The percentage of subjects passed in 1984-85 varied considerably, ranging from 48.5 to 81.8.

Reason For Referral

Although students were recommended for a variety of reasons (and frequently more than one reason), the majority of students were admitted to

the program because of attendance problems. Table 2 shows the frequency of reasons for referral. Seventy-four percent of the students had a record of excessive absence, and 65 percent demonstrated a pattern of erratic attendance. In addition, almost one-third of the students had a record of lateness or cutting classes.

Other reasons were cited for admitting students to this program. Thirty-five percent of the students were reading two years below grade level, and 36 percent were exhibiting behavior problems (see Table 2). Even though the students were quite old (see Table 1), they were typical of the special education population. Thus, few students were selected specifically because they were overage.

Level Of Service

A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff assigned students either to intensive or monitoring services, depending on their severity of need as reflected in the attendance rate. Students who had more severe attendance problems were assigned to intensive services (N = 1,679). (This level of service delivery was designed to consist of full involvement in a number of the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. service components.) About 500 students who appeared to have milder attendance problems were to be assigned to monitoring services, which involved outreach and attendance follow-up activities.

Table 3 shows the background characteristics of the students based on the level of service they received. The two monitoring and intensive services groups were similar in age and academic performance, but were different with regard to average number of days present in the previous year. The monitoring students had an average attendance of 139 days, while the intensive students had an average attendance of 125 days.

TABLE 2

Reasons for Selecting Students to Participate
in the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. Special Education Program
(N = 2,343)

Reasons for Selection	Students Served	
	Number[a]	Percent
Attendance		
Excessive absences	1,718	73.3
Erratic attendance	1,529	65.3
Tardiness	758	32.4
Cutting classes	735	31.4
Other Reasons		
Two or more years below grade level in reading	815	34.8
Course Failure	624	26.6
Behavioral problems	846	36.1
Health problems	152	6.5
Overage	25	1.1
LEP	19	0.8
Other	70	3.0

[a]Students were referred for more than one reason.

Source: Teacher reports as recorded on student data retrieval forms.

TABLE 3

Participants' Age, Previous Attendance, and Subjects Passed by Level of Service Provided

Level of Service	N[a]	Age in 1985-86[b]	Average Number of Days Present, 1984-85[c]	Subjects Passed, 1984-85	
				Average Number[d]	Percent[e]
Monitored	(509)	15.2	139.5	3.2	54.5
Intensive	(1,679)	15.0	125.3	2.9	56.7
Total	(2,188)	15.0	128.5	3.0	56.6

[a]Based on number of students for whom level of service was reported. Not all students are reported for each variable.

[b]Average age in January, 1986.

[c]Average number of days present is based on 180 school days (full year).

[d]Seventy-nine percent of students were reported to have taken from one to 11 subjects. Twenty percent of students were reported as having no subjects passed or failed. (They are not included in the analysis.) The remaining 0.3 percent students were reported as having passed or failed more than 11 subjects.

[e]Average percents are based on total number of subjects passed divided by the number of subjects passed and failed in the 1984-85 year.

Source: Student I.E.P.s and cumulative records.

Services Received

The A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program offered students a broad range of services in six service components (see above). Within these components, specific interventions were provided. Table 4 lists the interventions and the percent of students who received these services.

Facilitating Services. Attendance tracking was the most frequently delivered service. Attendance was tracked for 97.2 percent of the students on a regular basis throughout their participation in the program.

Attendance Outreach. Home visits were a key element of the program because they provided a direct link between the school and the home, and offered an opportunity to directly assess factors contributing to poor attendance. Their importance was reflected in the fact that 89.8 percent of the students in the program received home visits by a family worker, and approximately one-third of the students received six or more visits while they were participants in the program.

Guidance and Counseling. About 40 percent of the students received counseling services. Because many of the students were already receiving mandated counseling services at the time of admission to the program, they were not offered additional counseling by A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff.

Health. A.I.D.P./D.P.P. personnel reviewed 87.6 percent of participating students' health records. The purpose was to assess, and then provide the appropriate service link for students with health needs.

School Linkages. These services were targeted at "older" students, those in the upper grades for whom planning for future education or employment was most relevant. Articulation (planning and arranging the transfer from junior high school to a suitable high school) was provided to

TABLE 4

Percent of Students Receiving Program Services
(N = 2,343)

Services Received	Students Served	
	Number[a]	Percent
FACILITATING SERVICES		
Monitored Attendance	2,278	97.2
Outreach to Community Agencies	1,601	69.3
Outreach to Parents	2,041	87.1
ATTENDANCE OUTREACH		
Home Visits	2,103	89.8
Personal Phone Contacts	1,877	80.1
Robot Phone	1,336	57.0
Mail Contact	1,578	67.3
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING		
Counseling Sessions	912	39.0
Parent Participation	400	17.0
HEALTH		
Records Reviewed	2,052	87.6
Linkage With Health Professionals	1,635	69.8
SCHOOL LINKAGES		
Articulation (planning)	1,405	60.0
Visit High Schools	1,995	85.1
Listen To High School Speakers	1,316	56.2
Work-Study Jobs	732	31.2
Career Day Participation	1,410	60.2
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION		
Adkins Life Skills	985	42.0
Simulated Careers	1,614	68.9
Career Speakers	1,461	62.4
Career Days	1,431	61.1
Field Trips	1,672	71.4
Career Education Activities	1,592	68.0

[a]Because students generally received more than one service, column totals more than 100 percent.

Source: O.E.A.-developed student data retrieval form.

a large percentage (60 percent) of students. Information to assist students in planning the direction of future studies was also provided to a high percentage of students listening to high school speakers (56 percent), and career day participation (60 percent). The activity which had the highest level of participation in this component was visits to high schools (85 percent). Although placing students in appropriate jobs is difficult, almost one-third of the students engaged in work-study activities.

Alternative Education. Alternative education services focused on introducing students to the world of work through trips, speakers, career education activities, and curriculum designed to teach work readiness skills. More than 61 percent of the students were exposed to each of these services, with the exception of one: the Adkins Life Skills' career development/work readiness curriculum (42 percent).

Service Delivery by Region

The level of service delivery varied substantially among regions, despite the fact that all regions were required to offer all six service components. Table 5 shows the level of service delivery among full-year students, by region, calculated as the mean number of interventions per student during the 1985-86 school year. The ranges of the mean number of service provided to each student by region were: facilitating services (135.9 to 338.6), attendance outreach (13.9 to 59.2), counseling (3.2 to 17.5), health (2.0 to 3.0), school linkages (7.0 to 28.0), and alternative education programs (7.7 to 22.0).

Of all the regions, region C appeared to mount the most intensive effort, ranking highly in all areas except alternative education programs.

TABLE 5

Mean Frequency of Services Received, by Region[a]

Region	SERVICES					
	Facilitating[b] Services	Attendance[c] Outreach	Counseling[d]	Health[e]	School[f] Linkages	Alternative Ed.[g] Programs
A	143.3	59.2	12.7	2.0	17.8	13.0
(N)[h]	(173)	(173)	(163)	(173)	(156)	(173)
B	250.5	13.9	3.2	2.9	7.0	22.0
(N)	(169)	(167)	(54)	(168)	(104)	(168)
C	338.6	54.7	15.7	2.2	13.9	11.3
(N)	(209)	(209)	(78)	(209)	(156)	(208)
D	223.8	28.7	4.8	3.0	10.3	7.7
(N)	(154)	(153)	(152)	(158)	(133)	(158)
E	135.9	17.1	9.3	2.3	11.9	12.7
(N)	(237)	(237)	(209)	(231)	(208)	(219)
F	228.8	23.0	13.5	2.1	28.0	7.9
(N)	(170)	(159)	(138)	(178)	(130)	(178)
G	254.0	32.5	17.5	2.6	13.5	13.8
(N)	(245)	(246)	(170)	(171)	(22)	(239)
TOTAL	225.3	32.9	11.4	2.4	14.9	12.7
	(1365)	(1352)	(967)	(1295)	(912)	(1350)

[a] Mean number of interventions per full-year student during 1985-86.

[b] Monitoring; outreach to community agencies; outreach to parents.

[c] Home visits; personal phone contacts; telephone robot contacts; mail contacts.

[d] Guidance/counseling sessions; parent/group activities.

[e] Records reviewed; linkage with professionals as needed.

[f] Articulation activities; visiting high schools; high school speakers; work-study or jobs; career days.

[g] Adkins Life Skills; simulated careers; speakers on careers; career days; field trips; career education/work-study.

[h] N refers to the number of students in each region who received an A.I.D.P./D.P.P. service at least once.

Source: Student data retrieval forms.

Conversely, D and E ranked towards the bottom in the frequency of delivery of services in all components.

In some regions, there appeared to be a relationship between program emphasis and the needs of students served. In region F, which had the highest average attendance in the previous year, attendance outreach was deemphasized, while school linkages were emphasized more than in any other region. In region G, with the lowest rate of attendance in the previous year, efforts focused on providing counseling, facilitating services, and alternate education programs.

In contrast to C's lack of emphasis on alternative education programs, B gave particular emphasis to this component. A, on the other hand, focused heavily on attendance outreach and, to a slightly lesser degree, on school linkage activities.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The following section presents findings on changes in participants' attendance and academic performance, and reasons for leaving the program before the end of the year. Attendance change is presented for students who participated for the full year and for those who began the program during the course of the year. The attendance of full-year participants is further analyzed by the type of service they received and their attendance patterns during the previous year.

Full-Year Participants

Change in Attendance Among Full-Year Participants. Table 6 shows the percentage of students who attended the program for the full 1985-86 school year and improved their attendance. Thirty-four percent of students

TABLE 6

Student Attendance Improvement, by Region[a]

Region	Percent of Students Who Improved	N[b]
A	25.7	152
B	38.1	134
C	34.8	155
D	31.4	140
E	39.5	147
F	38.8	129
G	33.7	105
TOTAL	34.5	962

[a]"Improvement" refers to the program objective that students increase their attendance by at least one day above their attendance during the previous year.

[b]Total students who received services for a full year.

Note: About 400 students (42 percent) whose program start and end dates indicated that they were full-year students did not have complete attendance data.

Source: Student daily classroom attendance records and cumulative record cards.

receiving a full year of service improved their attendance. This percentage is below the Chancellor's 50 percent criterion for improvement in attendance. Within regions, the percent of students who improved ranged from 25.7 percent to 39.5 percent. In three regions (B, E, and F), more than 38 percent of the students showed improvement in attendance between 1984-85 and their year in A.I.D.P./D.P.P.

The average percentage attendance declined 7.1 percentage points, from 70.8 percent in 1984-85 to 63.7 percent for 1985-86. This change in attendance is comparable to that of the general at-risk population.

Change In Attendance By Level Of Service. The attendance records of students receiving monitoring services and those receiving intensive services were compared to see if attendance improvement differed based on level of service. Table 7 summarizes the results. After a full year of service, 47.4 percent of monitored students showed an improvement in their attendance. In contrast, 30.1 percent of intensive students had improved. It appears that students classified to receive monitoring services were more responsive to intervention irrespective of their previous year's attendance patterns.

Results By Previous Year's Attendance and Intensity of Intervention. O.E.A. examined change in student attendance as a function of 1984-85 attendance and students' 1985-86 level of program participation. It was hypothesized that students with more absences would show a different pattern of improvement from those who were absent less often in the previous year. It was also hypothesized that students who received more program services would be more likely to show improvement than those who received fewer program services.

TABLE 7

Student Attendance Improvement By
Level of Service[a]
(N = 911)

Level of Service	Percent of Students Who Improved	N[b]
Intensive	30.1	700
Monitored	47.4	211

[a]"Improvement" refers to the program objective that students increase their attendance by at least one day above their attendance during the previous year.

[b]Students who received a full year of services and for whom level of service was reported.

Source: Student daily classroom attendance records and cumulative record cards.

Table 8 shows student attendance improvement in 1985-86 compared to their previous year's attendance. As mentioned above, overall, almost 35 percent of full-year students showed improved attendance. Students with weaker attendance in 1984-85 were more likely to show improvement than those with better attendance. Over 47 percent of students absent 81 days or more in 1984-85 improved, while 16 percent of those with 0-20 absences improved. It should be noted, however, that these percentages are probably affected by two statistical artifacts: the 0-20 group had fairly little room left for improvement (a ceiling effect), while the 81 percent or more group was more likely to show gains simply because it was an extremely low group to begin with (regression effects). Even with this in mind, the tendency for students with poorer attendance to improve more is still evident.

O.E.A. examined the intensity of the intervention received to determine if more program service was related to improved attendance. The analysis showed that attendance improvement did not vary overall by the intensity of service reported, except in the case of school linkages and alternative education services. A larger percent of students who received more of these two services improved their attendance in 1985-86 than those who received fewer.

In sum, full-year students targeted for monitoring services were more likely to show improvement in attendance than those targeted for intensive services. Students with poorer attendance in the previous year were more likely to show an improvement in attendance than those with stronger patterns. Finally, students who received more school linkage and

TABLE 8

Student Attendance Improvement in 1985-86
by Absence in 1984-85[a]

Days Absent 1984-85	Monitor	Intensive	Percent of Students Who Improved	N[b]
0-20	28.3 (53)	7.3 (123)	16.5	188
21-40	45.1 (91)	26.8 (213)	34.2	325
41-60	54.8 (31)	39.1 (161)	42.2	199
61-80	73.3 (15)	27.4 (84)	34.3	105
81 or more	61.9 (21)	45.0 (120)	47.3	148
Total	46.0 (211)	29.4 (701)	34.5	965

[a]"Improvement" refers to the program objective that students increase their 1985-86 attendance by at least one day above their attendance during the previous year.

[b]Students who received a full year of services.

Source: Student daily classroom attendance records and cumulative record cards.

alternative education services showed a greater improvement in attendance than those with less.

Students Starting the Program After the Beginning of the Year

The attendance of students who entered the program at different times after the beginning of the school year was examined to determine their patterns of attendance change. For these students, their attendance two months prior to entering the program was compared to their attendance two months after entering it. Table 9 presents the attendance improvement of students starting the program during three time periods after the beginning of the year. Overall, 47 percent of these students had a higher rate of attendance in the two months following the onset of program participation than they had shown prior to participation. Students with weaker attendance prior to participation were more likely to show improvement than those with stronger prior attendance. This overall pattern is similar to the improvement shown among full-year students (see Table 8). However, it should be noted that students who began the program in November and December showed an anomalous pattern of improvement. Students with high attendance rates just prior to program participation in November and December showed the greatest improvement. This apparent paradox may be the result of selection criteria used at the beginning of the school year.

Academic Performance Among Full-Year Participants

Student records were examined to determine how many students had improved in their academic performance during the program year. However, O.E.A. had to modify the academic performance objective because of the unique special education instructional program. The Chancellor's objective

TABLE 9

Percentage of Late Entry Students
Who Showed Improved Attendance
by Starting Date and Pre-Project

Pre-project Absences[b]	Program Starting Date: Nov/Dec %	Nov/Dec N	Jan/Feb %	Jan/Feb N	Mar/Apr %	Mar/Apr N	Total Percent	Total N
0-5	53.2	47	14.5	69	34.7	49	34.1	165
6-10	40.5	42	44.2	77	48.0	102	44.2	221
11-15	45.5	22	47.7	44	50.8	63	48.0	129
16-20	36.8	19	65.0	20	50.0	46	50.6	85
21+	28.3	60	70.9	79	63.9	108	54.4	247
TOTAL	43.2	190	46.4	289	51.6	368	47.1	847

[a]Data presented in the table refer to improvement as measured by the differences between the percent of days attended in the two months prior to the starting date in the program and the percent of days attended in the two months subsequent to the starting date in the program. A student was considered to have improved if the subsequent period had a higher percent attendance than the previous period.

[b]Absences in two-month period prior to entering the program.

Source: Student daily classroom attendance records and cumulative record charts.

was stated in terms of more subjects passed. "Subjects" have a different interpretation in special education, where instruction in academic subjects is organized by each student's individual education plan's short-term objectives. Thus, academic performance for special education students isbased on skills mastery. Indeed, it may be that as students with special attendance needs, A.I.D.P. participants were given fewer objectives to meet in 1985-86 than in the previous year. In addition, students may take fewer non-academic subjects than they had previously. Because students are not necessarily expected to meet a similar number of skill objectives or pass the same number of courses, the original objective is inapplicable. Nevertheless, about 40 percent of the students showed an improvement in the proportion of subjects passed in 1985-86 compared to 1984-85. This percent was below the 50 percent criterion set in the Chancellor's academic performance objective.

Reasons For Leaving The Program

Student records were examined to determine their reasons for leaving the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program prior to the completion of the academic year. (See Table 10). Reasons for leaving the program included: transferring to a different school; leaving the program and remaining in the same school; or dropping out. About 700 students were reported to have left the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program. Of these, 16 percent were classified as long-term absences or discharges. This represents five percent of all program participants. Approximately one-fourth of all program participants left the program for other reasons. Among those who left the program for any reason, the pattern varied among regions. With the exception of Regions A and C, most students changed schools. Overall, very few students exited

TABLE 10

Reasons for Students Exiting Program
by Region (in percent)[a]

Region	N	Proportion of Total Program Participants	REASONS		
			Exited Program[b]	Changed Schools[c]	Dropped Out; Non-Attending[d]
A	38	12.4	5.6	2.9	3.9
B	206	55.5	1.6	51.2	2.7
C	63	15.6	-	4.5	11.3
D	126	53.4	0.9	50.8	1.7
E	150	33.2	2.0	28.7	2.5
F	63	28.9	0.5	22.0	6.4
G	53	15.2	-	10.3	4.9
TOTAL	699	29.9	1.5	23.6	4.8

[a]Percent of all participants in a region who exited the program.

[b]Students who were mainstreamed, returned to regular program, or decertified, and who remained in the same school.

[c]Students who transferred to another school, graduated to high school, moved away or entered a different program service category.

[d]Students categorized as Long Term Absences (L.T.A.s) and/or officially discharged from school without graduating.

Source: Student data retrieval forms.

the program (while remaining in the same school). In Region A, however, a notable number of students exited the program. The dropout pattern varied somewhat among regions. In Region C, about 11 percent of the students dropped out. In Regions B, D, and E, fewer than three percent dropped out. These variations may be related to differences in student selection practices as well as service delivery.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

The A.I.D.P./D.P.P. program was generally implemented as planned. Regional teams provided services in the six program service components to at-risk MIS I and II and C.S.U. students. School personnel were supportive and cooperative. Principals made the necessary arrangements to integrate the program in the schools. Classroom teachers were consulted and worked collaboratively with the A.I.D.P./D.P.P. staff.

Staff Responsibilities

The administrative duties and coordinating responsibilities of the facilitating services component placed demands on team facilitators which they perceived as excessive. A number of them reported that they were unable to execute their responsibilities in other components as much as they felt was needed. Their administrative demands were particularly burdensome, because, unlike A.I.D.P. programs for general education, they had itinerant assignments.

Teacher trainers and counselors reported that the alternative education program component required a great deal of time. Thus, while the Adkins Life Skills program appeared to be an effective career education curriculum, fewer students participated in this activity than in other related activities.

Level of Service Delivery

Students were classified by the level of service to be provided, i.e., to receive monitoring or intensive service. This two-tiered approach to service delivery appears to be an effective use of limited resources, given

differences in student needs and the existence of related school programs to meet those needs (e.g. counseling as a mandated special education service). It appears from the findings, however, that monitoring and intensive services students often received similar degrees of services, belying the original distinction.

STUDENT SELECTION

The Chancellor's A.I.D.P./D.P.P. student selection criteria emphasize attendance problems, but provide a good deal of discretion in selection. Given differences in middle school MIS II populations in each region, staff selected students with different characteristics. Additional variability was the result of the selection of students for monitoring services only, and the participation of potential candidates in complementary non-program services.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Attendance Objective

The program objective stated that 50 percent of the participants would improve in attendance in 1985-86 compared to the previous year. Findings show that thirty-four percent of the students who received a full year of services improved their attendance rate from 1984-85 to 1985-86; 47 percent of the students who entered the program after the beginning of the school year showed immediate improvement after joining it. When short-term students are combined with full-year students, overall 40 percent of the students showed improvement in their attendance when compared to their previous attendance.

Among participants for whom full-year data were available, 47 percent of the students assigned to monitoring services showed an improvement in their attendance, and 30 percent of the students assigned to intensive program services showed improvement.

Academic Objective

The program objective stated that 50 percent of the participants would pass more courses in 1985-86 than they had in the previous year. This objective is inapplicable to special education. Rather than a constant sequence of subjects, students are given a variable number of short-term objectives to master each year. Thus, for the purpose of assessing academic performance, O.E.A. has examined the proportion of subjects passed of all those taken in 1984-85 and 1985-86. About 40 percent of the students showed improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above results, recommendations for the second full year of operation are the following:

- If resources permit, create a separate line for a full-time facilitator to handle administration and free the guidance counselor, social worker, or teacher trainer to provide service on a full-time basis.
- Alternative education and school-linkage services should be expanded and offered to more students. This would entail: training more staff in the Adkins Life Skills program; developing high-interest programs for students who function on a lower academic level; and identifying employment opportunities suitable for these students.
- Issue specific guidelines for providing more systematic interventions to students classified as needing intensive program service or monitoring services.

- Program attendance and academic performance goals might be re-examined in light of the objective data to determine if they are appropriate for this population.